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ABSTRACT

The authors have been involved in the development of training programs for school psychologists and teachers. A major objective of these efforts is to capitalize on interdisciplinary collaboration to equip future educational workers to understand the needs of children and the process of education as one of dynamic change. This paper describes the training programs for school psychologists and prospective social studies teachers at the University of California, Berkeley. The school psychologist trainees worked with the student teachers in providing mental health consultation. Results indicate that the optimum time for consultation intervention for beginning teachers is during their earliest exposure to the classroom experience. For school psychologists, the period is earlier, often during their second year of training. (Author/HMV)

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SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS AND TEACHERS AS CHANGE AGENTS: THE ROLE OF MENTAL HEALTH CONSULTATION IN FACILITATING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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The authors have been involved, with additional colleagues, in the development of training programs for school psychologists and teachers within the School of Education at U.C. Berkeley. A major objective of these efforts is to capitalize on interdisciplinary collaboration to equip future educational workers to understand the needs of children and the process of education as one of dynamic change. Before describing the details of our work, several important considerations which have served as determinants of these efforts can be delineated.

Introduction

With the widespread recognition that our schools as an institution are failing in significant ways, the clamor for change has been loud and persistent. This demand has encompassed every aspect of the school as a social system, from the composition and control of the school district itself and the community served, to the methodology and content of the educational process. Change has acquired a value of its own. In the rush to generate alternatives to the traditional school unit or structure of the teaching-learning situation, judicious evaluation of the goals of change and of both the problems and the methodology involved in the process of change has often been lacking.

Such an evaluation requires an understanding of the forces of conflict which promote the need for change, and of the necessity for management of future conflict within the broad arena of education. In our contemporary world of increasing cultural complexity and diversity of life styles among youth and adults, one cannot expect agreement across all segments of population as to the goals for educational outcomes. Nevertheless, nearly all would agree that the schools are a key socialization agent in our complex world.

Our work environments demand facile responses to the presenting needs of those for whom we have the responsibility to transmit the skills for coping within a rapidly changing society. The particular conflicts which inhibit the change processes, as Benne (1) discusses them, are 1) uncertainty about the future, 2) conflicts over what is desirable, and 3) the relationships of old and young. As educators we cannot be certain that the learning which, in our best judgment, is the most important for students to acquire will later, in fact, prove to be so. The determination of the content of instruction and of the modes for delivery of educational service requires continuous review in the light of new knowledge and technology. Equally important are our own and our clients' changing aspirations and goals for education.

In the cross generational interchanges that characterize all educational programs, conflicts concerning mutual respect for differing life styles and personal growth objectives are to be expected. At the same time, the teacher and other educators who support the educational process are charged with the responsibility for

guaranteeing the acquisition of academic and social skills considered essential for survival and effective functioning in our multi-cultural society. The conflict between these two challenges, that of establishing a basis for mutual respect and guaranteeing a minimal standard of pupil accomplishment, presents the challenge for change, that of learning to accommodate an ongoing process to rapidly changing perceptions of need.

Perspectives on Training Educators for Change

Most of us who educate professionals belong in the more traditional cultural modes of the current and past. In our encounters with our students and the students' encounters, in turn, with their pupils or clients, we oversee interactions encompassing a vast array of differences of opinion about what is important to learn, with a diversity of interpersonal behavioral styles. Parents and the community consistently demand successful acquisition of academic and social skills by every child. In order to achieve these expectancies, prospective teachers and school psychologists will need to become responsible for the personal changes that may be required of them in the execution of their professional responsibilities. These changes include acceptance of the responsibility to arbitrate differences of opinion about what is important to learn and about how the learning should proceed. Furthermore, students need to acknowledge the professional self in the interactions engendered by conflict, to develop personal alternatives for resolution or management of conflict, and to maintain an ability to learn from others, both those older and younger.

Most students have not had the opportunity to learn to use their personal introspections as affective source material. But we have found

that training experiences for teachers and psychologists can be designed to promote students' self-awareness. Such awareness, we believe, is important as preparation for the interpersonal and social complexities of the students' future professional lives.

We have focused our efforts to promote adaptive change in education upon the facilitation of capacities within future educators for intrapersonal and interpersonal change. Thus we do not view the problem of preparing youth for the complex world of the future as one to be solved simply by institutional change. Rather we view the system as influenced greatly by the capacities and interactions of the people in it. Thus we hope to assist student teachers and psychologists to learn the use of "self" in their professional roles as educators.

The Role of Teacher in the Change Process

Individual classroom teachers are the directors of the educational process upon whom the successful function of the system depends. Consequently, support and help to teachers must be the base of more successful coping within schools with the process of change itself. In both pre-service and in-service teacher training programs, teachers must be helped to articular a consensus regarding standards for competence, which includes flexible responses to conflict resulting in change. In the process, teachers may attain a clearer sense of cohesive discipline as professionals, able to accept both the requirements for accountability and the opportunities for variable personal styles. Essential to each teacher's management of his role-function must be an awareness of himself as a participant in the interpersonal processes of the classroom. The

teacher can be genuinely responsive to the needs of individual children only after the achievement of these requisite skills.

The School Psychologist in the Change Process

Helping teachers better define their professional roles becomes a particular opportunity for the school mental health specialist. School psychologists can also contribute to the development of introspective and interpersonal skills on the part of the teacher. We have defined several competencies which are essential to successful outcomes of school psychologists' interactions with teachers. The school mental health specialist must, of course, be aware of his own involvement as he interacts (hopefully unanxiously so) with others in problem-solving situations. To the extent that he can become an attentive listener, accepting of the affective involvement of the teacher in a non-judgmental manner, he will be more successful in involving teachers and administrators in exploring problem issues. He may help teachers to become attentive to the multiple, interacting factors of the school-based situation, rather than to prejudged and prescribed blueprints for solutions as often inferred from case histories and test results.

Equally important to his work with teachers will be the psychologist's capacity to understand individual differences in children. With this knowledge he may foster the teachers' and administrators' capacities to individualize responses to a child which are both age appropriate and developmentally sound. The psychologist's knowledge can provide insights into evidences of conflict in children and their derivatives in symptomatic behavior at each age level or developmental stage.

The psychologist will need to involve educators in exploring evidences of capacity in both classroom practice and children which may provide encouragement and direction for further effort. With his knowledge about behavior, learning, and motivation, he can bring authoritative understanding to the search for alternative solutions to problems. The psychologist can persist in the search for alternatives only when he recognizes the ubiquitous nature of resistance to change, and the rebellious negativism toward authority so common in conflict-ridden confrontation. Indeed, such insights may be essential to sustained effort toward long-term goals when short-term failures characterize most of the problems brought to the psychologist's attention.

In all of these efforts, the school psychologist will judiciously seek ways to mobilize the energies of all those affected (whether child, parent, teacher, administrator, or additional consultant) in the interest of clearer definition of issues to be resolved, and of the available alternatives for change.

The Evolution of Professional Education Programs for Future "Change" Agents

It was the foregoing considerations, though perhaps conceptualized in precisely these ways only in retrospect, which directed the evolution of professional education programs for future "change" agents within the School of Education at U.C., Berkeley. These programs are the school psychology training program which began in 1965, and an earlier and concurrent effort in a social studies teacher education program.

Our joint efforts have come about primarily in the continuing development of the training programs with increasing numbers of

opportunities for collaboration among the psychologist educators and teacher educators. Each of these opportunities has served as a model for the kinds of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and system change necessary to facilitate the educational process for children.

The School Psychology Training Program at Berkeley

The school psychology training program at Berkeley was designed to be a departure from the traditional case study model. Psychologists trained at Berkeley use their knowledge of the behavioral sciences to find solutions to individual and group learning and behavior problems in the public schools. By using techniques of classroom observation and involvement, together with behavioral science methodology, they have been able to collaborate with teachers in planning school programs aimed at preventing the educational failure of normal and handicapped children.

The school psychologist trained at Berkeley learns to utilize operational interventions to influence the school as a social system through collaboration with individual teachers. These interventions must have specific learning and behavioral goals for children at their base, and must be directed at helping the school accommodate to the individual differences of children. Central to the development of these skills is field work experience during which the student learns to understand the classroom and the problems of teachers and administrators through extensive, direct participant observation. He will have learned to develop comfortable talking and problem-solving relationships with teachers, as well as to understand aspects of the clinical care of children with specific behavioral and emotional problems through a community mental health agency placement.

In the course of these experiences, students capitalize on opportunities for consultation to teachers and principals. In these consultation efforts the psychologist approaches the provision of preventive mental health services to populations at risk. As he does so, he avoids spending all of his time on direct service to individual pupils, or functioning as an agent of teacher or administrator in predetermined ways. To foster the learning of their own consultative skills, school psychology students participate as consultees in ongoing group consultation meetings with a child psychiatrist - mental health consultant throughout their field work experiences and during the internship year.

Learning Experiences in Teaching School Psychologists Consultation Skills

Experience in helping successive groups of graduate students in school psychology learn to assume the role of consultant in their field work placements has led to the identification of certain kinds of learning, as well as certain recurrent, regularly experienced problem areas which will be encountered by all such students. As a result, the consultant and supervisory faculty are alert to indications of these problems and are ready to focus the experience of students, both within the consultation sessions and in their work within the program as a whole, in specific ways which foster the students' learning.

Those student consultees who learn to describe their own work concisely and openly are most often those who are aware of their own roles in their professional work. At the same time, such students accept their own role as a "learner" and are most able to savor their experience as consultee. These students are often able to focus upon the "theme" of

their encounters with teachers and administrators. Recurrent themes in their own work with others become a source of insight useful in assessing their assets and problems in professional work. The ongoing work with a consultant enables the student-consultee to value the continuity of experience and the cumulative learning over time that may be a requisite of change.

Less successful students become judgmental about the professional workers they encounter, and cannot perceive the teacher's own definition of his effective professional function. Advance assumptions about competence and values of teachers or principals lead to evident approval or disapproval of the person involved. For students, as for fully trained professionals, such an attitude invites participation in the gossip and intrigue so rife within the school community. As a result, the student-professional finds it difficult to redirect the focus of emotional catharsis so that it centers on job-related, task-oriented problems. Students who are less perceptive and responsive in their understanding of their consultative function may also err in confronting these dilemmas by becoming the repository of confidential information.

As we persist in efforts to respond to the eager creativity within students as well as resistance, we continue to seek to understand school systems. From our own learning, we view the school as having unique features imposed by its key socializing function and the multi-faceted expectations focused upon the system. These are important understandings to share with future school psychologists who, through the acquisition and practice of consultative skills, will become the system change agents of the future.

The Provision of Consultation Experiences in the Teacher Education Program at Berkeley

Paralleling the experiences in school psychology training, we became increasingly interested in how teachers' training prepared them with understandings necessary to meet the demands of conflict and change and the opportunities of the mental health aspects of their teaching role.

The initial opportunity to provide mental health consultation by the child psychiatrist-consultant in the teacher training program began with the elementary teacher-intern program, a program since discontinued for independent reasons. That first experience has become a valuable frame of reference for subsequent experience in providing mental health consultation to student teachers. It was unique in the sense that the student interns without prior student teaching experience were placed in charge of their own classroom. A master teacher supervised as many as four to six teacher interns. Therefore, each teacher intern was on the firing line and alone with a new job about which there was considerable anxiety and uncertainty. In this situation, teacher interns needed help, and, for the most part, eagerly sought the opportunity to share experiences, concerns and job-related problems in the mental health consultation sessions. They met in groups of ten to twelve for a session of 1 1/2 hours, for every third week throughout the school year. We recognized that the meetings were too infrequent, a problem increased by holidays and breaks in the university or public school calendar. Additionally, the sessions had to be held on a Saturday morning as an experience added to a heavy workload, which fostered resistance in consultant and intern alike. On the other hand, a valued aspect of that experience was that the mental

health consultant was able to work with the supervising master teachers in their own group consultation, once weekly. Both experiences and the demonstration that confidentiality in each instance could be maintained led to the view of both students and supervising master teachers that mental health consultation could be a valued addition to the teacher training experience.

It soon became apparent that, if the initial experience was to be expanded to other programs, additional consultants would be required tc staff the project. A bridge between the school psychology and the teacher training programs rather naturally evolved with the recognition that those psychologists who had completed training might be given an opportunity to serve as consultants to student teachers. While enhancing the experience of the school psychologist, such a plan would make possible staffing these needs in additional teacher training programs. Initially, three school psychology graduates sat in as observers of the group of teacher interns with the psychiatrist consultant. The following year, these psychologists consulted with groups of student teachers, utilizing the psychiatric consultant as a training consultant.

The second experience was with an elementary teacher-training program. However, the results were considerably less satisfactory than with the intern teachers. Student teachers in the more conventional training program (since there was no longer an intern program) did not feel totally responsible for their classrooms. Since the student teachers did not have to confront the many conflicts and frustrations of the teacher in charge, they found it much more difficult to identify

problems for discussion in the consultation group. The sessions seemed often to revolve around requests for more active input from the psychologist-consultant. The psychologist struggled between the effort to maintain the consultant model for the group interaction and was often uncertain about the desirability of introducing appropriate concepts from psychology into the meetings.

Sources of Conflict for the Consultant-Educator

The conflict experienced by these school psychologists as consultants to student teachers paralleled lessons learned earlier in our efforts to introduce consultation to school psychology students. Many opportunities developed which required judgment on the part of the consultant about the introduction of experience and insight from his different professional background. In this effort the consultant supplies input going beyond the questions raised by students which often involves knowledge otherwise unavailable in the experience of students. An example from the psychiatrist to psychologist model might be the discussion from a medical and psychiatric viewpoint of different views about the management of children's disorders characterized by hyperactivity, minimal brain dmaage, and/or sources within the community, or understanding the relationship of mental retardation and emotional disorder to learning.

In the work with student teachers, psychologists not only provide mental health consultation, but introduce concepts about learning theory, child development, or interpersonal factors as they apply to the immediate classroom situation.

Repeated experiences with successive groups of student teachers over three years have provided us with knowledge from which to generalize the common problems which characterize and present themselves in these student teacher consultation groups. Now we are able to alert psychologists with no prior experience as group consultants both to types of problems student teachers present and to specific areas in which didactic input from the consultant might be helpful. A whole range of issues about the exercise and acceptance of authority is one of the first issues confronting student teachers. In addition, there are anxieties about their own competence, about problems dealing with master teachers, about understanding individual youngsters and their differences and major problems in working with children in groups.

The consultant first may need to help student teachers make distinctions between authority and power. In helping student teachers confront their own conflicts about assuming an authoritative position in their instructional and socializing roles, the consultant may be particularly helpful. Most student teachers must reconcile preconceptions about how they hope to deal with children with their actual classroom behavior, which is often in contradiction with those expectations. Only after young teachers become less alarmed and self-critical of their own anger and frustration, can they be helped to view alternative strategies for dealing with problems of authority and discipline in a rational manner. Only then can their attention become focused on such matters as understanding individual differences in children. They may then move to assessing children's academic function. Soon they are ready to discuss motivational and developmental aspects of learning and their relationship to the selection

and introduction of concept in curriculum content.

Evaluation of Mental Health Consultation in the Education of Educators

Efforts to evaluate our success in objective terms are only now beginning. The ultimate evaluation of the efforts in both programs must be based upon a long term study of improved teacher effectiveness as measured by pupil performance, the ultimate criterion of needed change. We can persist in this effort because of our initial impressions of progress towards involving school psychologists and teachers in a greater awareness in how to deal with themselves in relation to children and how to understand the teaching-learning process. In view of the expected difficulties and the occasional self doubts facing us, we have considered various time options for offering mental health consultation to teachers. Perhaps consultation should be postponed until the beginning of the teachers' professional career. Then our effort would be to assist young teachers under pressure to accommodate to the school system without losing those ideals which beginning teachers bring to their first classroom experience.

Even as we consider this alternative of waiting, we still must confront the fact that, unless student teachers are in a position to confront and reconcile interpersonal factors as they learn professional skills, they may continue to be immobilized by the predictable conflicts in their first and subsequent teaching assignments. We are, therefore, committed to the belief that recognition of affective process can merge with the acquisition of knowledge to result in learning which prepares professional educators to cope with conflict and bring about change. Consultation has the potential for assisting in this process.

The Work of Others

These efforts have developed in a context of the efforts of others involved in both mental health consultation and teacher training. The insights regarding consultation contributed by Caplan (5,6) and Berlin (2, 3, 4) have been of fundamental importance in our work. We have alluded to the work of Benne (1) earlier, who, among others, has been concerned with problems in the process of change. Nisbet (9) has added to our recognition of the importance of distinctions in authority versus power.

We think of our efforts in the context of the pioneering and very different work of the Reiss-Davis Clinic and Motto and Ekstein's (7) efforts to merge the frontiers of psychoanalysis and education. No comment on teacher education in this context at present would be complete without reference to the work of J.C. Hill who in 1972 wrote on Teaching and the Unconscious Mind. Specifically in relation to teacher training, we are aware of efforts at the University of Texas emphasizing comprehensive personal assessment (11). At California State University at Hayward there is a unique program integrating the training of teachers and counselors (10). Yet our work is distinct in the emphasis on development and use of the mental health consultant model.

Summary

In describing that aspect of these school psychology and teacher training programs which serve as the interface for the convergence of educational goals and the uses of mental health consultation, we are quite consciously asserting a number of convictions. Included among them is

the real hope for a society of mentally healthy individuals capable of adapting to our rapidly changing, technologically evolving and violence-threatened times. We see this hope as lying in the process of public education. It is within this system that we must effect changes necessary for a continuing viable society.

We all recognize that the principal mental health problem of childhood is the failure of children to learn the necessary academic and social competencies. Operational interventions with specific learning and behavioral goals for children must be devised which influence educators and, in turn, the school as a social system to accommodate to individual differences in children. The psychologist serving in schools is in the best position to apply his consultation skills to implement the findings of research and various theoretical approaches to inhibit educational failure, and thereby to reduce the incidence of mental health problems among school children. Such a role is consistent with the evolution of community mental health services as the emphasis has shifted from direct services to people with chronic difficulties to preventive services to populations at risk.

It is the individual classroom teacher upon whom the success or failure of the entire educational venture depends. Therefore, we should involve teachers at all levels in the awareness that how they deal with themselves in relation to children and how they teach values can be essential to the enhancement among future adults of capacities for adaptability, creativity, and, most importantly, for the tolerance of ambiguity.

From our experience, the optimum time for consultation intervention for beginning teachers is during their earliest exposure to the classroom experience when their expectations of themselves may be highest and their anxieties and frustrations may be greatest. For school psychologists, this period is earlier, often during the second year of training. At the level of global concerns, the qualities we hope to foster may better prepare members of our society for the problems of ongoing conflict and adaptability to change, both essential in any form of society we can foresee for the future.

By exercising their authoritative responsibility of determining in part the content and process of instruction, educators must make decisions about what and how learning will take place. Differences of opinion over what is most desirable among professional peers as well as between student and teacher produce unavoidable conflicts. If these and other conflicts are not openly debated, the educational institution loses its vitality, and/or those being educated will be only passively involved in their own educational program. In the ideal situation, educators can seize upon these conflicts as opportunities for examining needed change, whether of method, content, attitude, or behavior. For those of us involved in the education of educators, we must identify the human prerequisites for viewing conflict as an opportunity for any or all of the possible change outcomes to take place.

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